

Northern California Association of Home Builders

October 27, 2009

Eureka Mayor and City Council
531 K Street, Second Floor
Eureka, Ca, 95501

Re: Marina Center Project FE.I.R.

Honorable Mayor and City Council Members,

The Northern California Association of Home Builders believes that investments in our community, such as the Marina Center project, are critical for the welfare of Eureka, and we respectfully ask the Council to certify the Marina Center final E.I.R. tonight.

We believe the parties who are opposing the E.I.R.'s passing have failed to formulate an adequate case for their objections. Furthermore, we disagree with their contention that the document is inadequate. That assertion is a convenient and unsupportable tactic that does not reconcile with their further assertions that there has not been enough time for review. We also find it ironic that the vocal **proponents** of "infill", "live work" and "Smart Growth" planning are the same organizations that now want to kill a project that creates that very thing. The Marina Center offers retail, office and housing well inside the Eureka City limits! The inconsistency in their positions indicates that their motives are to either stop all development in our community or to prevent Mr. Arkley from developing. Neither of which is in the best interest of Eureka.

With regard to ESA who produced the E.I.R, some of our members have worked with them. We have found them to be a very professional organization, and we believe them to be impartial. They are certainly not a pushover. They stand by their opinions regardless of **what** the developer may want to see in the EIR. And, they were selected by the City of Eureka, not by Security National and the City has used them for many projects, including the Boardwalk project, Fisherman's Terminal, the C Street Improvements and at least seven others. They know this community very well and are well-respected in the industry. They know what is required in an E.I.R. and required by CEQA.

We feel the development process is actually what is on trial here this evening. No matter how solid and thorough an E.I.R. is, someone can always say it is not good enough and then threaten a lawsuit. The NCHB asks that the City Council not allow the opponents of growth

and jobs, to derail or delay the process with these threats. This project is a "game changer" for Eureka--if it goes forward more living wage jobs will follow. Not only will it employ folks upon its completion, it will employ many people in the building trades to help in the environmental clean-up, in its design, engineering, construction, and ongoing maintenance and we **need** these jobs. According to the Humboldt Economic Index, our local unemployment is 12.6%, nearly 3 points above the national average. Over the last 5 years enrollment in Eureka City Schools has declined 20%. Given this climate, now more than ever, all projects deserve a fair and objective process.

Besides, if not the Marina Project....then what? There is nobody on the horizon that has the drive, determination, vision and resources to pull this project off other than the project applicant. If for any reason they are knocked out of the game, the Balloon Track will almost certainly remain a contaminated eyesore for decades more.

We are thankful for the opportunity to stand up for our community and let common sense be heard again this evening, PLEASE support the project every step of the way - beginning with Certification of the Final E.I.R.. and lets move the north coast forward for ourselves and our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Pierson', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Greg Pierson, President
NCHB